

We're All Just Dying
By: Claudia Skolaut

CLAIRE

Early 20s, she is dating a much older guy who is friends with JOSH.

JOSH

40s, a friend of CLAIRE'S boyfriend

Time

Evening

Place

Josh's house, a small gathering of close friends.

(CLAIRE is mildly intoxicated and uninvited at a gathering for an acquaintance, JOSH, whose father has just passed away.)

CLAIRE

How are you holding up?

JOSH

As good as anyone can, I guess.

CLAIRE

So you're no worse off than anyone else.

JOSH

Who are you again?

CLAIRE

I'm Claire. I've been seeing Aaron for almost a month now, I'm just in town for the weekend.

JOSH

Right, well it's good to meet you.

CLAIRE

Good... you say that a lot. You know there are other ways of describing things.

JOSH

Yes, sure, but good is good enough for me.

CLAIRE

I think this party is excellent!

JOSH

It's not a party.

CLAIRE

Ahhh... sorry. Soiree, rather.

JOSH

You're aware my dad died last night?

CLAIRE

Hence the soiree.

JOSH

It's not a soiree! I'm sad and some of my closest friends are here and for some reason, you.

CLAIRE

Death doesn't have to be sad. It's as natural as breathing, waking up or sleeping.

JOSH

But it only happens once and that's it, you're done. My dad has ceased to exist. I am sad. I can be sad. It's normal to be sad. It's sad. It's new. It hasn't happened to me before. It's scary.

CLAIRE

I'm not scared of death.

JOSH

Surprising.

CLAIRE

It happens to everyone. Rich, poor, smart, ignorant, kind, evil, pretty, ugly, superficial, insightful, everyone. Why would you be so afraid of something that everyone ever has done? Are you scared of laughing or crying? Are you scared of seeing or hearing or tasting or smelling? Are you afraid to feel? If not, then how could you be afraid of death? If anything, you should be ready. It's going to happen.

(JOSH fidgets anxiously as she talks, and drops his beer bottle. It shatters.)

CLAIRE

It happened to your dad.

JOSH

You don't think I know that?! That's why you're all here! My dad died and I needed to be around people so I wouldn't slip into a spiral of depression. My friends showed up so I wouldn't feel so fucking alone.

CLAIRE

Death is one of the most unifying things. It brings us together. Look at all of us. We're here.

JOSH

For now.

CLAIRE

There you go, you're coming around. Mortality isn't something to fear. We can't change it. No one ever has, so why bother bothering. All we have to go on is the death that we know and see. We know it's real, but not necessarily what it is or why it is. It just is. We may as well accept it, befriend it.

JOSH

Cheers to living with death, the most loyal of companions!

CLAIRE

Huzzah!

JOSH

And I'm supposed to just fucking live? My dad's gone, but death is closer than ever. Maybe I don't want to be so close to death. Maybe dad didn't want to go. But he's gone and I'll never know. I can't know. I don't know.

CLAIRE

But is *knowing* the answer?

JOSH

What do you mean, is *knowing* the answer? If I knew, I wouldn't be wondering. I'd know.

CLAIRE

Humans are so obsessed with knowing. We can't ever really know, so why bother trying to figure everything out. There are some things that are beyond what we know, out of our control. People think that if they knew the secrets of the universe they would suddenly have this magical ability to live in comfort and security. They would be powerful. It's true, knowledge is power. We all think we know more than the next guy. But no one knows. If they do, they're lying. We should all just accept that and stop pretending like we know what's going on. Just live in the moment and accept whatever happens.

JOSH

This moment is fucking shit. I don't want to accept that my dad just died. It was yesterday, for Christ's sake! I'm not here for an existential crisis, I didn't choose this. It just happened and I'm here because I have to be.

CLAIRE

It was yesterday. It is today.

JOSH

It's too much

CLAIRE

It's nothing.

JOSH

It's everything.

CLAIRE

Death is nothing.

JOSH

Death is everything.

CLAIRE

The absence of everything, yes.

JOSH

And that's supposed to be comforting?

CLAIRE

But you're saying this is too much.

JOSH

What are you saying?

CLAIRE

I'm just saying what you're saying.

JOSH

You don't mean?

CLAIRE

Of course not. It just doesn't have to be something to fear. It simply will be.

(Aaron stumbles over and brings them both another beer. He then proceeds to pass out on the couch.)

JOSH

Inconsiderate.

CLAIRE

Who, Aaron?

JOSH

Flaunting his life, as if it's a perfectly normal Saturday night. That's just like him, taking advantage of a situation. Exploiting my sadness for some free drinks.

CLAIRE

We thought it was a party.

JOSH

He still does.

CLAIRE

And you don't.

JOSH

Because it's not!